United Nations S/PV.7476

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7476th meeting
Monday, 29 June 2015, 10.40 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ibrahim	(Malaysia)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/468)

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15-20063 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/468)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/468, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014).

I now give the floor to Ms. Kyung-wha Kang.

Ms. Kyung-wha Kang: I have the honour to deliver the following statement, prepared by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Stephen O'Brien. He deeply regrets that he is unable to present it in person today, owing to previously scheduled travel plans that could not be changed, but he would like to assure the Council that he will do so next time.

Three years ago, the United Nations expressed its condemnation and deep concern about the 1,200 people who had been killed in Syria up to that point, and about the 10,000 refugees who had fled to neighbouring countries. There were already warnings that what was happening in Syria included atrocities that could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Today, more than 220,000 people have been killed and more than a million injured. Some 7.6 million have been displaced inside the country, and more than 4 million have fled across its borders. And the violence continues with utter impunity.

Over the past month, that violence, which has been perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, has neither abated nor diminished in brutality. The continued use of explosive weapons in populated towns and cities in Aleppo, Dar'a, Idlib, Damascus, Deir ez-Zor and Hasakeh governorates, among others, has killed hundreds of people, many of them children, and displaced tens of thousands. Indiscriminate attacks on Government-controlled areas in Aleppo killed at least 116 people in April and May, nearly half of them women and children. In the past week, the situation has deteriorated significantly in Kobani/Ain Al-Arab following attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) aimed at reclaiming that city, which have reportedly resulted in civilian deaths and further displacement.

The Government's use of barrel bombs in populated areas has continued, causing hundreds of civilian deaths and widespread destruction across the country. Some of those incidents are described in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/468), including barrel-bomb attacks that killed more than 200 civilians in Aleppo, at least 24 of them children. A barrel-bomb attack on a mosque in Aleppo on 22 June reportedly killed 10 people. Attacks on medical facilities continue, in blatant disregard for international humanitarian law and resolution 2139 (2014). According to the Physicians for Human Rights organization, the month of May was the worst on record for such attacks since the start of the conflict, with 15 verified attacks on medical facilities, all by aerial bombardment, including eight barrel-bomb attacks. Ten medical staffers were killed.

Intense fighting across the country has displaced tens of thousands more people. In Tel Abyad, some 50,000 people have been forced from their homes since May. In Dar'a, fighting between Government forces and non-State armed groups began in the early hours of 24 June, displacing at least 40,000 people. In the city of Hasakeh, an ISIL attack displaced at least 60,000 people in the past week, and in Raqqa, thousands of Kurds were told by ISIL to leave the governorate. Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon continue to bear the lion's share of the ever-growing burden of caring for those who flee Syria. Turkey, for example, is already hosting 1.8 million refugees, and took in at least 23,000 of those who fled Tel Abyad in mid-June. I would like to thank those neighbours of Syria and to echo the comments made recently on the subject by the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres (see S/PV.7433).

The rest of the world should step up to do substantively more to address the consequences of this conflict. It is crucial that other countries welcome Syrians who are seeking a safe haven.

Despite the extremely challenging environment, humanitarian organizations operating from within Syria and from neighbouring countries continue to reach millions of people in need. Each month, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been feeding approximately 4.1 million people; the World Health Organization is distributing medicines and supplies to around 2.7 million; and UNICEF is reaching 2.2 million with water, sanitation services, education and other support. The Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees continues to provide more than 240,000 people with core relief items and protection services, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East supports around 480,000 Palestine refugees. That is complemented by the ongoing programmes run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which reached more than a million people in May.

However, aid deliveries to the 4.8 million people in need in hard-to-reach areas remain a serious challenge, owing to active conflicts, poor security and deliberate obstruction by the parties to the conflict. United Nations agencies and partners are reaching only about 34 per cent of hard-to-reach and besieged areas every month. Of the 48 inter-agency requests made to the Government so far in 2015, 20 were approved following meetings in April and June and 12 have been put on hold because of poor security, leaving 16 awaiting Government approval. The recent progress in the approval of access to some locations must continue, and we call on the Government to approve the pending requests and allow rapid, unimpeded and sustainable access to all hard-to-reach locations. We also note the Government's quick approvals in May and June of a number of short-term visas for United Nations and international NGO staff to attend humanitarian meetings hosted in Damascus within the context of the whole of Syria, and we very much hope that trend will continue.

Parties to the conflict continue to besiege 422,000 civilians. Some humanitarian assistance, including medical supplies, was delivered to eastern Ghouta, besieged by Government forces, during April and May, and assistance was airlifted into western neighbourhoods of Deir ez-Zor under siege from ISIL forces. But the assistance that the United Nations and partners have managed to get into besieged areas in the past three months has been wholly inadequate. Aid agencies are working hard to assist the millions of Syrians affected by the conflict. But those efforts require adequate resources. Only a quarter of the total appeal for lifesaving work in Syria and the region has been funded as of today, and food assistance across the region is now in jeopardy.

Since January, WFP has had to reduce its food provisions by 30 per cent, and more cuts are anticipated in the next three months owing to serious funding shortfalls.

Resolution 2165 (2014) continues to be a strong tool for humanitarian organizations attempting to reach Syrians in need. Resolutions 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) have enabled the United Nations and partners to reach people in need who were largely inaccessible before. United Nations cross-border food and medical shipments have increased significantly over the past six months. The 92 shipments since 1 December have included food assistance for 2.6 million people; basic household items for more than 1 million people; medical supplies and treatments for over 1 million people; and water and sanitation supplies for more than 600,000 people. Active fighting and shifting conflict lines have had an impact on the use of certain crossing points. Given the fluid and dynamic nature of the conflict in Syria, it is crucial for United Nations agencies to be able to use any and every route — across both borders and conflict lines — to reach those who require assistance.

The parties to the conflict continue to violate human rights and international humanitarian law with impunity by killing and torturing civilians, blocking humanitarian access and destroying and besieging communities. The siege on more than 422,000 people must be lifted. Those who need protection and assistance in all parts of Syria must be provided with rapid and unhindered access to such assistance, including to medical services and surgical supplies. The relentless use of barrel bombs by the Government must be halted immediately, as must other forms of indiscriminate attacks on civilians, which are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law. We look to the Council to pressure the parties to get them to protect civilians and abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, and to promote and seek systematic accountability for violations.

For the people of Syria and the humanitarians who assist them, it is hard to see an end to this nightmare of

violence and destruction. We look to the leadership of the Council to press for a political solution.

The President: I thank Ms. Khang for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): After the issuance of the Secretary-General's sixteenth report (S/2015/468) on the implementation of resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014), on the humanitarian situation in Syria, there are still some Member States in the Organization that deal with that painful situation in isolation from the foreign interventionist, political, economic and military backdrop. Perhaps that situation reaches its utmost level of absurdity when those Member States present themselves as both the opponent and the judge at the same time. It is currently clear for everyone that many of those who lament the misery of the Syrian people are — in reality — the ones causing such misery. The cards are now on the table, the veil has fallen, and the shedding of Syrian blood in the north and south of the country is coordinated through attacks organized in the operational military and intelligence headquarters in both Jordan and Turkey.

That reality proves the lack of correctness and credibility in the approach adopted by some parties, since the beginning of the crisis, in dealing with the situation in Syria in general and with the humanitarian issue in particular.

To settle political scores with the Syrian Government is one thing, while to adopt internationally unacceptable coercive measures against the Syrian people is something else.

To disagree with the Syrian Government is one thing, while to deny Syria's role in protecting its people and maintaining its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity — and to refuse to coordinate the fight against terrorism with Syria and provide it with humanitarian assistance — is another thing.

To see the reality and deal with it as it is — in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law — is one thing, while to be obsessed with targeting the Syrian Government with baseless allegations and to interfere in Syrian domestic affairs is something else.

To deal with the catastrophic consequences of the humanitarian crisis in Syria is one thing, while to ignore the root causes of the crisis and to be preoccupied with marginal issues is something else entirely.

There is no doubt that improving the humanitarian situation in Syria — in concrete and real terms — entails abandoning the wrong approach that I have just referred to. We cannot talk about ending the suffering and hardships of Syrians or about ending the humanitarian crisis in Syria against a backdrop of silence on Turkey and Jordan's continued use of their territories as bases and conduits for foreign terrorists and mercenaries. We cannot end the humanitarian crisis as long as the regimes in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other countries still prefer to support terrorism generously and call it a revolution instead of funding the humanitarian response plan — funding for which has not yet exceeded 25 per cent.

How can we improve the humanitarian situation in the country in the light of the fact that the American Central Intelligence Agency spends $1 billion annually, according to the Washington Post, on training terrorists in camps in Jordan, Qatar, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, as well in some European States, so as to form an army of 10,000 so-called moderate terrorists?

That was not included in Mr. Ban's report and would never be included in his reports.

The sponsors of terror try to link every heinous act on earth to the Syrian State; they have fabricated false witnesses; they have organized formal and informal conferences and meetings within and outside the United Nations. The last meeting of that type was the recent Arria Formula meeting, organized by France and Spain. The goal of those meetings has been to tarnish the image of the Syrian Government. However, they have deliberately neglected the role of the armed gangs that they brought into Syria to commit murder, slaughter, looting and ethnic and religious cleansing. They have ignored the massacres and murders committed by those gangs against civilians before each meeting of the Security Council on Syria. They have conducted interviews with takfiri and terrorist warlords, with gunmen, with those armed with machetes and swords, with those who eat human livers and hearts, and have given them legitimacy. They have presented them to the media as revolutionaries in order to cover up the slaughter, bloodshed, rape, captivity, bombings and beheadings. They have ignored the indiscriminate mortar shells that fall daily on civilians in Damascus, Aleppo and other Syrian cities, killing thousands of innocent people.

The Saudi documents newly leaked through WikiLeaks prove that Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have been working since the first months of the crisis in Syria to militarize the situation by providing money, weapons and support to terrorist groups. They have successively referred to that as the "Arab spring", peaceful mobility and then moderate movement. WikiLeaks has also revealed that those three regimes in particular have formed a joint military committee for that purpose. It might be useful for some colleagues in the Council to familiarize themselves with the contents of the telegram sent by the Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon to his capital on 1 March 2012, during the first year of the crisis in Syria, while some delegations in the Council were maintaining that what was happening in Syria was a purely peaceful "spring" movement.

Here I will quote an excerpt from the cable sent by the Saudi Ambassador:

> "We must continue to support the Syrian armed resistance by offering a high salary to each recruit defecting from the regular army and providing weapons equal to those possessed by the regime. We must support the neighbouring countries of Syria, especially Jordan, and also provide financial support to the populations living close to the Syrian borders with Lebanon and Iraq in order to promote an environment conducive to the Syrian revolution".

Before the leaking of the Saudi documents, the Turkish press revealed certain videos that proved the involvement of the Erdoğan regime in smuggling weapons into Syria by way of convoys intended to contain medical aid. By the way, those convoys passed through the border checkpoints requested by OCHA at the time of the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014) on humanitarian access. At that time, we had requested guarantees on the communications and nationalities mechanism, but they were never provided by the Secretariat. However, they did provide weapons, instead of humanitarian assistance, through the border checkpoints that OCHA had insisted on in the light of resolution 2165 (2014).

Judge Aziz Takçı, one of the four Turkish judges arrested by the Erdoğan regime after the scandal, has confirmed that more than 2,000 trucks loaded with missiles, rockets and bombs have been sent to Syria through Turkey. Also, the leader of the Turkish People's Democratic Party has confirmed that the massacre that took place in the town of Ayn al-Arab/Kobani last week, which claimed the lives of dozens of Syrians, was a result of the years of support by the Turkish Government to Daesh extremists. The Daesh terrorists travelled to Ayn al-Arab through Turkish territory.

Prior to the aforementioned scandals, United Nations reports revealed the smuggling of weapons from Libya to Syria via Turkey and Lebanon. Prior to the current report, we forwarded to the Secretary-General and to the Council all of the documents and information proving the involvement of Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in the smuggling of weapons and facilitating the entry of terrorists into my country, Syria.

However, we have encountered and continue to encounter the flagrant denial of that by some members of the Council. Yet with each passing day, the correctness and credibility of our statements made since the beginning of the crisis, both within and outside the Council, have become increasingly clear, and now the crimes of terrorism have reached the countries of those that were denying its presence in Syria.

I would like to emphasize that the Syrian Government is ready to cooperate with all sincere stakeholders in the Security Council to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria, despite our awareness that some members of the Council have gone too far in their support for terrorism and have thus become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Some of those members have used their support for human rights and the provision of protection and assistance to civilians as a tool to exert pressure in order to settle political scores with the Syrian Government.

In order to prove the hypocrisy and double standards related to the efforts of those countries in dealing with those noble principles, it is enough to note that they not only hid the Saudi regime's support for terrorism in Syria, but they went even further by covering up the Saudi war crimes in Yemen. In fact, such actions have prevented the delivery of humanitarian aid, thus causing widespread famine in Yemen, especially in the holy month of Ramadan. The Saudi regime has prevented even aircraft operated by the Red Cross from delivering medical aid to Yemen.

Despite all of that, we have not seen any of the Member States that have appointed themselves the promoters of human rights and the protectors of civilians in Syria say a word to condemn such Saudi practices. Yet those Member States have not missed an

opportunity to hold fabricated emergency meetings and side events in order to direct false allegations against the Syrian Government, which has so far signed six humanitarian response plans with the United Nations enabling it to provide humanitarian assistance to nearly 10.5 million Syrian citizens in April, May and June.

Of course, the report did not mention the Syrian Government's cooperation. All of the assistance that was described in the report was indicated as being provided by United Nations agencies, disregarding the Syrian Government's efforts to provide protection to the agencies that are providing aid.

In Syria, we are fighting terrorism on behalf of humanity as a whole. The Syrian army, by eliminating foreign terrorists in Syria, is protecting dozens of innocent people who could become potential victims of those terrorists when they return to their countries to carry out such activities there. The recent tragic events in Tunisia, France and Kuwait have proved us right.

Those who seek to discredit that illuminating truth are partners in spreading the scourge of terrorism. However, Syria's steadfast Government, people and army have led the Security Council to adopt three important resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, on combating Daesh, the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist organizations, as well as on combating the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters.

Despite the lack of implementation of those resolutions and despite the many groups that are conspiring against us in Syria and continuing to provide misinformation and false allegations, we will continue to fight our war against terrorism in order to protect our people and to rid the world of that scourge. The terrorist war has been unleashed and is now hitting targets in Damascus and Baghdad and spreading to Abuja and Tunisia. It has reached Kuwait and Paris and Sydney and Boston. The Council is therefore called upon to wake up before it has regrets, at a time when regret will have no benefit.

Finally, the Government of Syria is exerting its utmost effort to end the crisis in Syria via the peaceful means adopted by the Security Council and, naturally, approved by the Syrian Government and by all of those with good intentions. We will continue to exert peaceful efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the Syrian crisis, without foreign intervention in Syria's domestic affairs.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.